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MISS LAURA MINKLER.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT,

BY

MISS LAURA MINKLER.

A Memorial Volume.

“God giveth songs in the night.”

—Job.

BURLINGTON IOWA :
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PREFACE

THIS book is like a half-opened rose, plucked before reaching its maturity of fragrance and beauty. The author had planned a much larger volume, intending to put into it much more of thought and labor before presenting it to the public, "But God's finger touched her and she slept."

Many of the poems have been recited by her in lecture tours through Iowa as State Organizer of the Loyal Temperance Legion. Many friends have expressed their desire to secure the poems in this permanent form, and doubtless many more of her co-workers in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and other persons who have known the author and loved her for her work, and have enjoyed and admired her poems as she has recited them, will be glad of the opportunity of securing this memorial volume.

The poems are placed before the public with the hope that their merit will secure for them the approval that they received in their recitation. The author was very sensitive with reference to any effort she made, and, if living, would ask for kindly criticism of these children of her mind.

Many of the poems were not in the finished form in which the author intended to place them. It was her

intention to secure a competent amanuensis and revise her entire work. The writer, into whose hands the manuscripts were placed to be prepared for publication, does not feel free to make any extensive alterations, were he competent to do so; it is the author's work as she left it that is desired. The book is a memento of Laura Minkler, her own work, that will be treasured by all who knew her.

The writer has found great pleasure in his work. The reading of these lines seemed like hearing the voice of one he had learned to love during more than three years of labor as her pastor. Kindly words of suggestion, criticism, sympathy and encouragement spoken by her have returned unbidden to renew their helpfulness and inspiration.

The purity of her life, her boundless faith in God and in humanity, and the continued usefulness of her life greatly endeared her to all who knew her, but especially to her home church and community. At her death an entire village rose up to say: "It is our loss; it was our Laura."

E. J. L.

IN MEMORIAM.

LAURA MINKLER, the subject of this sketch, and author of the following poems, was born in Leroy, Lake County, Ohio, on the 18th of June, A. D., 1848, and came to Iowa with her parents when five years of age, locating in Delaware County, where she resided until her pure and serene life closed on the 18th of March, A. D., 1891.

She lost her sight, becoming totally blind when ten years of age. Yet this shadow, cast over her outward life, by no means beclouded her spirit within. At the age of twelve the light of God's pardoning love shined into her soul, and from this time no companionship was more real to her than that of her Christ. It was shortly after her conversion that her first effort at rhyme was made, in which, speaking of her blindness, she says :

“Another light was given
From God on high who rules in heaven—
It was that mental, moral light,
Whose import far exceeds the sight ;
And in the darkened night 'twill shine,
And make me happy, though I'm blind.
Yes, I can henceforth happy be
Since such a light is given me.”

She was identified with the Methodist Episcopal church, a zealous worker.

She entered the Iowa College for the Blind at Vinton, Iowa, September 26, 1859, and graduated with honors in June, 1870. During part of the last few years of her college life she was employed as teacher. On account of poor health, she left her school work and entered the lecture field, having championed the cause of Woman's Rights. Afterwards she canvassed in different parts of the state for books and maps. In the spring of '84 she consecrated herself to the work of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, being kindly aided and encouraged by Mrs. Clara P. White, Mrs. Mary J. Aldrich, and others. She continued a faithful and zealous worker for the cause until her death, which occurred at Minburn, Iowa, while on a lecturing tour in that part of the state.

Well may it be said of her, "She hath done what she could." She had learned to "be not simply good—but good for something," and made through life the best use of her God-given talents. She knew that to live really was to act energetically. She made duty a pleasure and believed firmly that each and every person, in every position in life, has a duty to perform in that sphere in which he has been placed. She understood her path of duty, and walked uprightly therein. It has been said by some of her most intimate friends: "Was ever one more just?" By others: "How unselfish;" And by all: "How devoted to any good work." So thoroughly appreciative was she that it was a great privilege for her friends to be able to offer any assistance that would afford her pleasure.

Being deprived of sight in early childhood, she seemed to desire to make up for this great loss by doing all that was possible for her to do, and that was much. Aside from her kind ministration, she had for years added to the comfort of her family in a financial way, and by her persevering labors has left her only surviving parent comfortable while she may live, thus showing to the world what one woman, though blind, may do. Seldom did a shadow of discontent darken her mind; in her, Patience seemed to "have her perfect work." She always seemed to inspire those with whom she came in contact by her purity, love and charity for all mankind. She was truly a worthy person for this great work "For God, and Home, and Native Land." She had that charity for others that would help the down-trodden to look up and take courage when they heard her words of comfort, ever feeling that it was human to err, and that a word of cheer would lift up the fallen. She possessed that kindness which connects earth with heaven. She always had kindly words of encouragement for the down-cast and for the erring. While they had so many to chide, she had a smile ever ready to help them on to a better way. Truly she was a heroine of common life—the greatest heroine of all. She was all that we could wish, a daughter true, a sister kind, a friend sincere. The good deeds she has left behind will live after her. "Though dead she yet speaketh."

Death to her was but a bridge to a more beautiful world, a life with Christ, a reunion with friends gone before. Oft have we heard her repeat:

“ There is no death ! The stars go down
To rise upon some fairer shore,
And bright in Heaven’s jewelled crown
They shine forevermore.

There is no death ! The leaves may fall,
And flowers may fade and pass away ;
They only wait through wintry hours
The coming of the May.

There is no death ! An angel form
Walks o’er the earth with silent tread,
And bears our best loved things away,
And then we call them ‘ dead.’

He leaves our hearts all desolate,
He plucks our fairest, sweetest flowers :
Transplanted into bliss, they now
Adorn immortal bowers.”

A FRIEND.

*FIRST POEM: WRITTEN WHEN TWELVE
YEARS OF AGE — INSERTED
WITHOUT REVISION.*

'TWAS a beautiful Summer's morning,
When the golden sun was shining
Over hill and over dale ;
When the fleecy clouds were wreathing
In one soft, silken veil.
Then I stood in awe and wonder
'Neath the heavenly arch of blue,
While the brilliant sun was drinking
Every drop of pearly dew.
I saw the beauteous roses blooming at my feet ;
And here and there, by chance, I saw
A vine of bitter-sweet.
There the tiny violet sought to hide its head
Beneath some widely spreading oak
That sheltered its humble bed.
The little fish were sailing round,
And seemed to like the rippling sound.
The bird was singing on the bough,
Not hidden from me like as now.
All seemed gladsome, blithe and gay,
And I was just as blithe as they.

But the fair morn, so pure and bright,
At last did end in one long night.
The babbling brook, where oft I stood,
Ran murmuring by the viewless wood ;
Nor did the sunbeams in it play,
To light it on its weary way.
The sky was darkened to my view,
And not a beam of light shone round.
The flowers had lost their brilliant hue ;
The bird unseen now sung his song.
And must that night ere long be spent,
And not one ray of light be sent
To chase the solitary gloom,
Or cheer me till I reach the tomb ?
Ah, no ! Another light was given
From God on high who rules in heaven ;
It was that mental, moral light,
Whose import far exceeds the sight ;
And in the darkened night 'twill shine,
And make me happy, though I'm blind.
Yes, I can henceforth happy be,
Since such a light is given me.

*LUCY LAYTON, THE BOOK AGENT.**

“ ‘M Lucy Layton,” I heard her say,
 A delicate girl in dress of gray.
“Are you the Reverend Mr. Brown?
I’ve just arrived at your town;
Selling a grand new book,” said she,
“Have brought a copy for you to see.”

Then, with winning smile, held out the book,
But half recoiled at his altered look:
For he seemed to drop his priestly air,
And rudely said, “I’ve no time to spare.”
Then bowing coldly, he turned away,
And closed the door on the girl in gray,

Her cheeks were mantled with pride and pain
As she slowly sought the street again,
For the village seemed a city grown
To the timid girl that stood alone,
For all were strangers; and who would care
For the lonely one that wandered there?

And I said, as I saw her watch and wait
With doubt and dread at the preacher’s gate;
“Is that man indeed God’s chosen one
To proclaim the love of His dear Son?
He seems too heartless and harsh and cold
To gather lambs for the Master’s fold.”

* The plot and incidents of this poem are drawn from the life of the author.—EDITOR.

At length a frolicsome boy passed by,
And answered her question with flashing eye ;
“ Yes, there’s another ; his name is Peer ;
He lives in this beautiful house, right here :
He’s just the boss preacher of our town ;
But a bear lives there ; his name is Brown.”

She smiled, then went on her way again,
Tho’ her brow was knit with doubt and pain.
But she half revived with hope and cheer
At the friendly voice of Mr. Peer.
For his looks were kind, and his words were true
To strangers as well as those he knew.

She said : “ Tis a bright and pleasant day ; ”—
Talked of many things, but dared not say,
“ I am an agent, and have a book
At which I would like to have you look.”
But somehow he seemed to understand,
And taking the volume from her hand,

Said : “ This is a worthy book indeed,
And one the people should own and read ;
I’ll take a copy, and gladly do
All that I can in assisting you.
But I think you’d better rest to day :—
To morrow we’ll start you on your way.

“ O, there is no use of saying ‘ no ! ’
We’re all determined you can not go.
So let us this time have our own way,

And bide with us while in town you stay.”
She was too grateful and glad to speak,
And tears of gratitude coursed her cheek.

Ah, had he read in the face so worn
The noble purpose that nerved her on,
How failure, sickness and death had come,
Till mortgage laid on her childhood's home,
And aged parents her heart loved so
Must soon from the dear old homestead go?

It matters not ; but he understood
His mission on earth was doing good.
And think you it strange that Mr. Peer
Makes scores of converts every year?
That his kindly voice and loving heart
Lead many to choose the better part?

I watched with interest the girl in gray,
As patient she toiled from day to day,
And saw with shame the scorn and reproof
Of men and women that stood aloof
From the modest girl, as if she had been
A leper, or else a Magdalene.

But Lucy's suspense, how can I tell,
As house after house she rung the bell,
And met the heartless and harsh and bold,
And some that were haughty and proud and cold,
Who wounded with words that seemed genteel, —
For speech, like roses, may thorns conceal.

And servants met her with sullen frown,
Saying the mistress had gone up town,
When Lucy had heard the lady say,
“Go, Bridget, tell her I’ve gone away.”
Some paid no heed to the clanging bell,—
It may be agents can’t ring them well.

Thus as she canvassed from day to day,
The world a desert before her lay ;—
But there were oases bright and fair
For which she thanked God in humble prayer.
And some were so tender, kind and true,
They seemed like loved ones she always knew.

Sometimes merchants would leisurely say :
“Well, what can I do for you to-day ?”
And when she’d answer : “I have a book
At which I would like to have you look ;”
They’d turn away with a bustling air,
Too busy a minute’s time to spare.

Some were going to buy or to build,
And some had promises unfulfilled.
Some wanted the book indeed, so much,
But hadn’t a dollar to pay for such ;
Yet counted their thousands by the score,
And laughed at the thought of being poor.

And women there were who wanted to buy,
But dared not, they said, with pitiful sigh,
For fear their husbands would fret and scold.

And what do you think their neighbors told?
“Those very women have their own way
Regardless of what their husbands say.”

Some seemed to think it were wrong, forsooth,
To tell an agent the blessed truth,
And false excuses would glibly tell,
When truth would answer them just as well.
But some were noble and kind and true,
To her burning brain like heavenly dew.

And when her poor heart seemed almost broke
With fears and failures and harsh words spoke,
Just at the moment of dark despair,
The star of success shone bright and fair.
Thus with fear and hope she struggled on,
Till spring and summer and fall had gone.

Until December had come and passed,
And snows of winter fell thick and fast,
Struggled she bravely to bear her part,
Feeling more lonely and sad at heart
Than those with kindred can ever know,
Who heed not the wintry wild wind's blow.

Far away by a flickering fire
Knelt an aged dame and feeble sire,
Praying for Lucy, whom fate had thrown
Out into the cold, wide world alone;—
Praying the Father for Jesus' sake
To comfort her poor heart, lest it break

When the darling child should come to know
The sorrow that bowed their white hairs low ;
“ And on the morrow, God give us grace
To quit forever this dear old place.
Forgive us, Father, if it be wrong
To cling to the home we’ve loved so long.

“And we beseech Thee, in Jesus’ name,
Withhold, if may be, the pauper’s shame.
But nevertheless, Thy will be done,
Sustained by the love of Thy dear Son :
Amen.” And lo ! as they rose from prayer
Lucy, their darling, was standing there.

O ! what were all of the scorns and jeers !
And what were the heart-aches, toil and tears,
Compared with the love of their embrace,
The tears and kisses that rained her face !
With the smile of peace and joy that came
To the aged lips that breathed her name !

The sweet “ God bless you, God bless you, child ! ”
That came from lips with rapture wild,
As sobbed she : “ Father, you need not go
From the dear old home we all love so ;
And never again from you I’ll roam :—
I’ve paid the mortgage, and saved our home ! ”

ALONE IN THE CITY.

ALONE in the great busy city,
Alone in the hurrying street,
Though ever the gay and the witty,
The thoughtful and thoughtless I meet.
There's no look of kindly remembrance,
No one to tenderly speak,
But the critical gaze bent upon me
Brings blushes and tears to my cheek.

Alone, all alone in the city,
Alone in the tumult and glare,
With none to encourage or pity,
With no one's considerate care.
I list to the tones of affection
That are lavished on all but me,
And long for a kind word of greeting,
Though but from a stranger it be.

And I cry, "O, this desolate city!
'This city of hearts and of homes,
Has no crumb of welcome or pity
For the sad one that wearily roams!
The mothers, I ween, have forgotten
How fortune has varied and smiled;
The future may hold for their darlings
What it held for my poor mother's child."

Alone in the far away city,—
 Yet the Saviour's affectionate care,
 And dear mother's love and pity
 Will always encircle me there,
 And kind father, at daily devotion,
 Will pray for me still as I roam,
 And my kindred and friends will soon hasten
 To welcome the tired one home.

*DIVORCED FROM BAD WHISKEY AND
 MARRIED TO KATE.*

“OH me, I'm so lonesome. 'Tis five years to-day
 Since Pathrick, me darelino, wint fare, fare away.
 There's no hope in me hairt, all me comfort is o'er.
 Something tills me to-night I shall see him no more.
 Holy Mary, look down with compassion and love
 And grant that we meet with the blissed above;
 For Hivin would hairdly be Hivin to me
 Without the swate face of dear Pathrick McKee.

“Sure there's somebody comin'. They've opened the
 gate.

Does me dress look all right? Is me collar on straight?
 O Pathrick, me darling, me own blissed Pat!
 Plase take a chair, sir, and give me your hat,
 And excuse me for spakin' so lovin', ye know;
 I was just making fun of our troth long ago,
 When we were much younger, with quare, foolish ways;
 We're changed a great dale since those earlier days.

“Ye are sittled, I hope, and married maybe,
And have brought your wife back for your ould friends
to see.

Our town looks the same, it is nearly as small,
Though people have changed a great dale after all;
Some are married, some dead, some moved to the West,
Though many remain of the friends you knew best.
Poor Murphy, the richest man once in the town,
Is now but a pauper. Strong drink broke him down.

“But Foley, who used to be poor as a mouse,
Reformed long ago and has built a fine house.
And Jamie, his brother, we counted so bad,
Is now off to college, and quite a fine lad.
And Molly McGuire is now taller than me,
She’ll be married next week to young Doctor Lee.
Ye’ve been gone now these three or four years, aint you
Pat?

Or, isn’t it hairdly as long since, as that?”

“Ah Kate, ’tis five years, as ye very will know,
For I was ave-droppin’, and heard ye say so;
And heard ye a cryin’ and callin’ for me,
And sayin’ me face you would niver more see.
And thin, as your clock was a clatterin’ eight,
I stole from your window and rattled the gate;
And twas well that I listen’d, or else I’d not known
But that your soft hairt was as haird as a stone.

“For ye spoke of our past love so hairtlessly Kate,
And rattied off news at such wonderful rate.
Ah, no nade to blush, Kate, because ye were true;

For all the five years I've been constant to you ;
Though I own when I lift I was mad as could be
That ye thought more of timperance doctrines than me ;
And because ye insisted a drop now and then
Would rank me with drunkards and vagabond men.

“ 'Twas no food for me pride, no praise for me strength,
And I vowed that I'd prove ye mistaken at length.
And though I've been drinking these long years, ye see
There's no look of a drunkard fastened on me.
And faith I've the papers 'long with me to show
I'm boss in the city machane shop below ;
Which niver had happened, unless I had known
Whin to drink with the boys, and whin to let it alone.

“ And I've built a fine house on Finnegan row,
The same as we planned our two silves long ago ;
And I've come for me woman ; for darelíng, ye see,
There's none but yourself could be Mrs. McKee.
Sure ye'll go with me now without raisin' a fear.
Then spake the word, love, that I'm dying to hear ;
For all the five years that we two were apart
Ye'd the half of me thoughts and all of me hairt.”

“ Oh Pat ! I'm so lonesome, me parents are dead,
And I've but me two hands to earn me day's bread ;
And I love ye, dear Pathrick, fare better thin life,
And earth would be Hivin could I be your wife.
But thin ye've been drinking, been drinking ye said,

And a moderate drinker I niver can wed.
Me poor cousin Ann that died six years ago,
Only married a moderate drinker you know.

“ Yet we saw her fillin’ a drunkard’s wife’s place,
And roses soon leavin’ the poor patient face ;
Saw the sunshine and joy from her young life depairt,
And the coffin lid close o’er the poor broken hairt ;
And said, as we gazed on the face of the dead,
‘ Death was swater indade, than the life that she led.’
Good-bye, Pathrick darling, foriver good-bye.
God grant that we meet with the blissed on high.”

“ Hush,—hush,—Katie dareling, ’twill craze me I know
To hear ye a grievin’ and takin’ on so ;
Sure I have been drinking this many a day,
But faith it was nothin’ but water and tay ,
For ’twas five years last night since I had a strong drop ;
And ye are the angel that caused me to stop.
I was only testin’ your brave lovin’ hairt
To see if ye’d changed while we two were apairt.

“ For some in the shades of the twenties, ye see,
Conclude to put up with wild fellows like me.
But I’m proud that me love is so faithful and true,
And would give the whole world, if I had it, for you.
But write to the city, me dareling, and see
If ye’re hearing the truth from wild Pathrick McKee.”
“ Oh Pat ! I’m so happy, my heart is so light,
I’ll not take the time and the trouble to write.

“ But down to the city to-morrow I’ll go.
And find for meself if the story is so.
But don’t think I’m doubtin’ the likes of ye, Pat ;
'Twill be a fine trip and I want a new hat.
And if all is so, I will soon be your wife,
And love ye, and trust ye the rist of me life.”

And she went to the city like a sensible girl,
With face looking calm tho’ her heart was awirl ;
And found for herself that his statements were so.
And now they are living on Finnegan row.
Pat sings at the cottage both early and late,
“ I’m divorced from bad whiskey and married to Kate.”

THE CASTLES WE BUILT IN THE SAND.

I N fancy how often I wander
Through the mazes of childhood’s bright hours,
And tenderly, lovingly ponder
Where life was strewn thickest with flowers.
I pause at the old rustic school house
Where we gathered, a light hearted band,
To study our lessons till noon-time,
Then play in the glittering sand.

O, the queer little structures we builded
Of sand, by the murmuring brook,
That fancy so magically gilded
That forms of great castles they took,
Surrounded by tower and terrace,

And all that we children thought grand.
Far nicer than book-pictured mansions
Were ours that we built in the sand.

And oft the large scholars stood near us,
Amused at our innocent play,
But some would unfeelingly jeer us
For renewing our building each day.
But some would encourage and help us,
Though they said they could not understand
Why we little ones never grew weary
Of building our houses of sand.

And when I revert to those treasures,
And live o'er my childhood again,
Recounting the innocent pleasures
That cheered us and satisfied then,
I ask if the youths and the maidens
Who watched us so smiling and bland,
Were not building beautiful castles
Less real than ours in the sand.

For bright eyes were brighter with glances
That crimsoned the beautiful cheek,
And fond hearts, I trow, cherished fancies
That lips were too bashful to speak.
And so, while our hands fashioned daily
The castles we counted so fair,
Their hearts were as busily building
Bright castles of hope in the air.

And *we* laughed as our frail castles perished,
For we knew they would crumble away ;
But the castles *they* tenderly cherished
Brought heart-aches with every decay ;
And over the beautiful faces
Drift shadows of trouble and care,
As memory uncovers the ruins
Of the castles they built in the air.

And ever since then we have builded
Bright castles to moulder away,
That fancy has magically gilded,
As it gilded our mansions that day.
Each year we build wiser and better,
But the structures we rear cannot stand ;
And few are as life-like and real
As those that we built in the sand.

ABSENCE.

THE April sunshine warm and fair
Touches the glad earth cheerily,
Wild violets scent the warm still air ;
Yet ever through the bright spring hours,
The sunshine, and the opening flowers,
My spirit hungers to be fed,
And faints for love's dear daily bread,
Yearning, beloved, for thee.

The day wears on, the evening lone
Comes up across the misty lea.
I watched the stars as one by one
They glimmer out. My eyes are wet,
My heart is filled with vain regret,
Haunting it like a sad refrain.
I cannot still this restless pain,
Thinking, beloved, of thee.

The twilight deepens, brooding sleep
Shadows the green earth tenderly.
The hour lies hushed in slumber deep,
The peace of heaven seems strangely near.
I kneel beneath the moonbeams clear,
And soft upon my troubled heart
Comes down a blessed sense of rest,
Praying, beloved, for thee.

THE CROOKED HOUSE.

I STOOD on the bank of a murmuring stream,
Where the beautiful waters would flash and gleam
'Neath the glittering rays of the golden sun,
Watching the song-birds one by one,
As over the river deep and wide
They flew, like my thoughts, to the other side.

The sky above was silvery blue,
And velvety flowers of varying hue

Nestled in moss-beds soft and green,
Or hung in rich garlands the trees between,
Fanned by zephyrs that swept along
Laden with perfume and sweetest song.

Wondering I gazed, for it seemed then to me
Such marvelous beauty never could be,
Save in the far-away tropical zone,
Where the frosts of dread winter are ever unknown ;
Else in the fabled Utopian isle,
Where peace did e'er reign and beauty beguile.

But lo, as I gazed on the marvelous scene,
Pond'ring what such wondrous beauty could mean,
I saw, in the midst of the vast solitude,
A structure of logs so uncomely and rude,
I forgot all the beauty on either hand,
Eagerly trying to understand

What such an ill-shapen structure meant.
The logs were decayed, knotted and bent,
Gnarled and twisted, ill-shapen and sear.
Yet it seemed the labor of many a year,
For the crooked building was strangely high,
Towering from earth to the very sky.

“ Ah, this is the work of a madman's brain,”
I said, “ Yea, the builder was surely insane,
For there are so many beautiful trees
He might have selected as well as these
So gnarled and twisted and bent and brown. ’
And I cried in terror, “ ’Twill topple down ! ”

“ Better ’twould be if it only would fall,
If that could be the end of it all ! ”
These words were said in a pitying tone,
And turning, I found I was not there alone,
For a stranger stood near me with glorious eyes,
And said furthermore, to my pain and surprise:

“ Behold now the structure your life work has wrought.
’Twas built by your every day word and thought,
From childhood’s hours till this very day.
And, saddest of all, it will stand for aye.
For these curious logs, that you wondering behold,
Are so many days of your life that is told.

“ Each day is a log, and each log is a scroll,
At the trumpet’s sound they will all unroll,
And then you shall read in letters of flame,—
Read to your honor or read to your shame,—
Every secret word and thought and deed :
You and the angels in glory shall read.

“ And every log that is twisted or bent
Suggests a sin, or a day misspent.”
“ Then, master, ” I cried, “ it never can be
That any such structure was builded by me.
For surely my life has not been so bad,
And no vicious thoughts have I ever had,

“ Though I’ve wandered a little way, now and then,
From the path the Savior has marked out for men.”
“ ’Tis tiny grains form the earth,” he said,

“And tiny drops fill the ocean’s bed.
Though much of the past be forgotten by you,
Your record is made, and the record is true.

“But you can remember the week that is gone,—
The feelings you’ve cherished, the deeds you have done.
Begin with the Sabbath and count every day,
And see if you’ve walked in the straight, narrow way.”
And thus I recounted in sorrow and shame,
For I dared not refuse, though I knew not his name:

“Sunday to church with the many I went,
With a look on my features of pious content,
And sat in the pew with sanctified air,
Not hearing the sermon, but noting with care
Such beautiful bonnets and dresses so fine,
And coveted one that was nicer than mine.
And I couldn’t help sighing a little to see
How many my neighbors dressed better than me.
But the parson thought ’twas the preached word
That profoundly my feelings had stirred.

“Monday I washed, and scolded too,
As tired women frequently do,
For I worked so hard that my nerves were unstrung,
And I hadn’t the power to bridle my tongue.

“Tuesday I purchased from merchant B——
Two yards of muslin. He gave me three,
But I said: ‘I’ll not bother to right the mistake,
As ’t isn’t the sort they usually make.’

“ Wednesday I spurned, on the hurrying street,
A motherless maiden I happened to meet,
Because I had somewhere understood
It was suspicioned she wasn’t good.
And I thought I’d be the first to show
I didn’t approve of sinning so.

“ Thursday I talked at a quilting up town,
Forgetting an angel was writing it down.
We discussed all the failings our lady friends had,
And all who were *absent* were shockingly bad.
They were stylish and proud, or too horribly plain ;
Too lazy and slack, or too greedy for gain ;
They tattled and slandered, paraded the street.
And made horrible butter that no one could eat.
But we promised each other we never would say
One word of the secrets we whispered that day.

“ And Friday morning I told Mrs. C——
I was very glad she called upon me,
And hoped she had come to remain all the day ;
But I wasn’t glad till she went away.

“ Saturday turned away from my door
An aged mendicant ragged and poor ;
For I said, and thought, I had nothing to spare,
But kindly I wished him success elsewhere.
Yet my Sunday’s baking was stored on the shelf,
And I had plenty of money to spend on myself.’’

Thus I saw, to my sorrow, each day of the seven
 I'd wandered still farther and farther from heaven.
 And I cried: "Have compassion! In mercy forgive!
 With God's help in future, more perfect I'll live!"
 "'Tis too late, your life work is done,
 Receive the reward you have righteously won."
 The earth reeled beneath me, the sky turned to flame,
 While angels and mortals re-echoed my shame.
 I fell to the earth with a terrible scream,
 And awoke to thank God it was only a dream.

A BOY'S TROUBLES.

THEY tell me a boy don't have troubles.
 It makes me as mad as can be.
 Have the old folks gone foolish or crazy.
 And forgotten such fellows as me?

I've always had oceans of trouble
 Since I could remember, I know,
 And cried more than laughed when a baby.
 I've often heard mother say so.

The big folks, they say, have their losses,
 And all sorts of trouble and care;
 But the children are thoughtless and happy.
 Yet I know we have all we can bear.

Don't we break our toys and our trinkets?
 And often lose marbles and ball?

And for it get scolded and punished,
Though we feel the worst of them all?

I can never go out without asking,
Must be careful and never stay late,
Must put off to bed in a minute,
As soon as the clock grumbles eight.

NOT GOD, BUT SIN.

Dedicated to Hattie Blackman, the Blind Schoolmate.

TELL me not that the Father's lips
Have blown out the lights that hung in the sky !
That he holds by his very finger tips
All brightness and beauty in total eclipse,
To my darkened and wondering eye !

O, tell me not that the Father's hand
Hath poured out this cup for my life to drink !
Though I cannot fathom or understand
The depth of his laws so wise and grand,
Yet my heart will feel and think ;

And I ask if the Heavenly Father dear
Wills the afflictions we mortals bear,
Then why not the sin and the doubt and the fear
That have caused so many a bitter tear,
And filled our lives with care ?

Nay, tell me not that the Father sends
 These days and months and years of night ;
 That his chastening rod always descends
 On those he would choose for his dearest friends,
 Constraining them to the right !

For somehow it comforts me more to think,
 'Tis but the result of broken laws.
 In pity he sweetens the cup I drink,
 And stays my heart lest it falter and sink ;
 But sin, not God, is the cause.

And just as the pitying mother bent
 To soothe her child that had burned its hand,
 So he soothes the pain that sin hath sent,
 And whispers, " Poor darling be content,
 I will lead to the better land."

WHERE IS MY BOY?

○WAY from the bustle and hum of the street,
 Where country and city in harmony meet,
 Is a villa, surrounded by fountains and flowers,
 With beautiful trees and vine-covered bowers,—
 A modern Eden of beauty and rest.
 Yet taste refined, and studious care,
 Has given the whole such a home-like air,
 That naught is pompous, though all is fair,
 And the lingering heart is blest.

But the light of that home is not sunshine and flowers,
But it is love and contentment that lighten the hours ;
And dear little Harold, a four year old boy,
Fills the cup to o'erflowing with comfort and joy.
His parents ne'er weary of watching their child,
And praising his roguish and innocent way ;
For he plays as children in cottages play,
Except he has far nicer trinkets than they ;
For wealth has indulgently smiled.

His play-room is crowded with all sorts of toys
That please the hearing and sight of small boys ;
He has a new train of cars, and a basin to float
His yesterday's present, a miniature boat.
But see, he has rummaged the closet below,
And found what is nicer by far than all that,
The coachman's old waistcoat and tall beaver hat ;
And he says, " I'll pretend I am old Dr. Platt,
And I can fool papa I know."

His blue eyes are flashing with joy and delight,
As his old dusty hat hides his ringlets from sight ;
His rosy face gleams as he paces the hall,
And tries to look stately and be very tall,
And heartily wishes papa was home ;
" For it seems it will never be time for tea,
So papa can come to guess who I be."
And every few moments he rushes to see
If papa has started to come.

But at last as he peers through the evergreen trees,
The form of his father he joyfully sees ;
With a shout of delight he springs to the door,
And greets there his father as never before.
He wears not a smile, but a fiendish-like frown.
Will his face brighten up at his darling's queer dress?
Will he stoop down to give him the wonted caress?
Or please him still greater by trying to guess
What big man has come from the town ?

But hearken ! What was it the father did say ?
“ Why, boy, do you always stand here in my way ?
Now go to your mother and leave me alone.”
“ Then kiss me first, papa,” he cried with a moan,
Lifting his blue eyes so pleading and mild.
But he shrieks like a demon, “ I told you to go,”
And dashes him down on the pavement below.
Merciful God ! He is drunken, and Oh !
He has slain his beautiful child.

But staggering onward he reaches his bed,
And knows not till dawn that his darling is dead.
For he heeds not the feet that rush hurriedly there,
Neither the mother's wild cry of despair.
He wakes from his stupor to call for his boy,
And find he has crossed to the heavenly shore ;
That the blue eyes are sleeping to waken no more,
And cold are the lips he refused at the door ;
And his life is emptied of joy.

His heart and his home are both shrouded in gloom.
When dear little Harold is laid in the tomb.
But the year marches on with a funeral tread,
And the grief-stricken mother is laid by her dead.
Her tender heart broke when robbed of its joy.
The father, a maniac, wanders the streets,
Plaintively searching the faces he meets
And these are the words that he only repeats :
“ Where is my boy ? ” “ Where is my boy ? ”

And often he bursts in the gilded saloon,
At the dark hour of midnight or glare of the noon ;
And he seems like a spectre so stricken and gray,
That the tempter shrinks back with a look of dismay.
And hushed, for a time is the reveler’s joy ;
And some to their dwellings will hurriedly fly ;
And others shrink back to escape from his eye,
Or stifle the sound of his pitiful cry—
“ Where is my boy ? ” “ Where is my boy ? ”

Ye fathers who visit the tempter’s foul den,
Where perish the riches and honor of men,
O think of the lives that are slain by the bowl,
And pause, ere you ruin both body and soul,
And by example your darlings destroy ;
Leading them down to a drunkard’s sad fate,
To lie in the gutter, or beg at the gate.
O pause ! ere you cry like that father, too late,
“ Where is my boy ? ” “ Where is my boy ? ”

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE OUTCAST.
Or THE BEREFT MOTHERS.

¶ EMPTY arms ! O aching heart !
A mother moaned by a new-made grave :
“ My child, why were we torn apart ?
Why could I not thy young life save ?
Earth is a desert, dark and drear,
Without thy winsome smile to cheer.

“ O baby ! baby ! could I tear
Away the clod that hides thee now,
And touch once more the shining hair
That clusters round thine angel brow,
And see, and kiss thee once again,
Then I might live to bear the pain.

“ But, O my child, that ne’er can be ;
I can but clasp the cold, white stone ;
The heavy earth holds back from me
The dearest idol I have known.”
Then kneeling in the twilight gray,
She wept as mothers only may.

Then lifting her pale face above,
She faltered, “ I will watch and wait.
My child is safe in realms of love,
I’ll greet him at the pearly gate.
Dear Lord, my stricken heart sustain,
Until I clasp my babe again.

Then something seemed to whisper low :
“ Be patient till thy work is done.
Forget thy sorrow and thy woe,
Soothing some other stricken one.’
And, from a little mound hard by,
She heard a piercing, bitter cry.

Then, hastening to the mourner’s side,
She faltered, “ Sister, look above,
Thy child is safe ; no ills betide
The blessed in the realms of love.
Mine too has crossed the pearly strand,
We’ll greet them in the better land.’

“ O mock me not with idle cheer,
There is no heaven for me in store.
My one life’s hope is buried here,
And I am doomed forever more.
O baby, had’st thou lived, maybe
I might have found the way with thee.

“ Aye, talk of heaven ; for thee ’tis well,
For thou shalt greet thine own again ;
But as for me in inmost hell,
The thought of heaven brings direst pain.
A grave is twixt thy child and thee ;
An awful gulf twixt mine and me.

“ Nay, touch me not ; dost thou not know
The sin polluted thing I be ?
Ah, if ’twere daylight’s piercing glow,

Then thou wouldst flee away from me.
My soul is leproused and unclean ;
I am the sin cursed Magdalene.

“ O ! I could calmly, sweetly bear
The longest life of bitter pain,
Had I the hope that over there
I, too, might clasp my loved again.
But O, alas ! that cannot be ;
A gulf is placed twixt mine and me.

“ But tell my blessed ones up there
To mix some pity with their blame.
My brain was crazed with want and care,
When first I bowed to sin and shame,
And oft I’ve tried in vain to cease
This life which robs my soul of peace.

“ Nay, lady, help has come too late,
My wasted life is past recall ;
But when ye pass the pearly gate,
Tell my dear sainted mother all.
And not to blame herself, but me,
And God can comfort her maybe.

“ Once I was happy, sweet was life,
With parents whom my heart loved dear ;
And happy, when an honored wife,
With best of husbands so sincere.
But my beloved parents died
The year that I became a bride.

“ And ere two other years rolled by
We lost our home and all we had.
But we were young, and hope beat high ;
And then it did not seem so bad.
Ah, yes, we lost our all by flame—
The very day our baby came.

“ And, ere the summer months had fled,
All joy in my youthful heart had flown ;
My dear companion, too, was dead,
And babe and I were left alone.
He sought a drowning child to save,
And found, instead, a wat’ry grave.

“ Then came long weeks of want and woe,
And bitter nights of grief and care.
And I had not, in the city’s glow,
A single friend my grief to share.
But for my child my heart had broke,
And I in realms of glory woke.

“ Ah ! many a weary day I sped
The crowded city up and down,
And begged for toil to earn my bread,
Receiving oft a heartless frown.
For some derided my request,
As to my heart my babe I pressed.

“ But some were kind and let me try
The varied work they had to do ;
But ere a fortnight wearied by,

I sickened, and my baby too.
And so the place was easy filled
By hands in toil far better skilled.

‘ And when I found I might not win
The barest meed, and keep my boy,
I wrote my husband’s wealthy kin,
Who had been friends in years of joy ;
And then through days and nights of grief,
I watched and prayed for kind relief.

“ And when at last a letter came,
I caught and pressed it to my lips,
And breathed with love the writer’s name,
Then all grew dark with strange eclipse.
But when at length the words were known,
My loving heart seemed turned to stone.

“ For thus the cruel letter read :
‘ Nay, dare not come nor write again !
We’ve heard the sin-cursed life you’ve led,
And spurn a loathsome Magdalene.
But had your life kept pure and true,
We had gladly shared our home with you.’

“ But lady, till that letter came,
I ne’er had thought of such vile sin ;
But ’reft of hope and honored name,
I vowed by vice my bread to win ;
For frenzied grief and black despair
Benumbed my heart and hushed my prayer.

“ O, would to God, that freezing night,
That I my starving boy had pressed
To wait till angels robed in white
Should bear us home to realms of rest ;
For what were death to such vile sin,
And such a life as mine hath been ? ”

“ Poor sister, e’en my selfish heart
Cries out, thou must no longer roam.
Let death but bear us two apart;
Come, share my friendship and my home ;
I might have sunk in greater sin,
Had I as friendless, tempted been.

“ And should I reach the pearly gate,
I’ll tell thy sainted mother all ;
And pitying will she learn the fate
That caused her stricken child to fall.
But heaven, it seems, would brighter be
To her, if only shared by thee.

“ But there is one, more tender still
Than loving mother e’er can be ;
’Tis he who died, that all who will
May from their guilty stains be free.
He saved a sin-cursed Magdalene,
And washed her spirit white and clean.

“ And now for you he intercedes.
Lo ! at the blessed Father’s throne,
His life, his death, his mercy pleads,

To you his spirit now says, 'Come.'
 O, hear his voice and clasp his hands,
 As now with outstretched arms he stands."
 "O precious Savior! loving Lord!
 The vilest of the vile I am;
 But I believe thy blessed word,
 O cleanse and save, thou bleeding Lamb."
 And lo, beside that little mound,
 The way to peace and heaven was found.
 And then with raptured soul she cried;
 "'Tis done, 'tis done, my soul is free.
 The risen Lord, the crucified,
 Has rolled my heavy sins from me.
 O wondrous pardon, matchless love,
 To cleanse and ope the gates above.
 "Dear father, mother, husband, child,
 I shall behold you all again,
 And Him, who in forgiveness smiled,
 And washed my heart from ev'ry stain.
 O sweet to die and sweet to live
 For Him, who could such pardon give.

THE CURTAIN OF HOPE.

I STAND at the threshold of another year,
 And knock at the scarce open door,
 And beg of the Master to let me see
 What it hath for me in store.
 But kindly, though firmly, he answereth me,
 "Wisely is hidden thy destiny."

But moment by moment the great door opes,
And with eager eyes I peer,
To see if most joy or sorrow is stored
For me, in the well-packed year.
But a sable curtain I shuddering see,
Concealing all that is to be.

A curtain more black than the brow of night ;
And whenever its dark folds wave,
A sickening horror fills my heart,
Like thoughts of a hopeless grave,
And wildly I turn with a bitter cry,
And beg of the Master to let me die.

But kindly and sweetly the dear Lord saith :
“ Nay ! turn from that curtain ye mortals call dread,
And choose, if you will, this fair one of light,—
This beautiful curtain of hope instead,
And bright through the darkness its folds you shall see,
Though it altereth not what is to be.”

“ Aye, if mine to choose, give me hope,” I cry,
“ For it maketh my heart so glad and light,
It almost seems woven of Angels’ smiles,
It is so wondrous bright ;
And somehow it strengtheneth, comforteth me,
So brightly it hideth my destiny.”

ALONE.

ALONE, thank God ! I'm alone at last ;
That another day with its toil is past ;
For the strength of my heart is ebbing so fast,
I could not have borne much more.

Alone, and apart from society's wiles,
I can cast off the form of cheerful smiles,
That the sadness of others, not mine, beguiles ;
For I smile when my heart is sad.

Alone ; now the tears, so frequently dried,
And beaten back by the monarch pride,
Can course my cheeks like a rushing tide,
And ease my burdened heart.

Alone. O God, dost thou hear the cry
That bursts from my heart when no one is nigh ?
Then, Father, take pity and let me die,
And rest in the silent grave.

LET BYGONES BE BYGONES.

LET bygones be bygones, if bygones are clouded
By aught that occasions a pang of regret.
Oh, let them in darkest oblivion be shrouded !
'Tis well, and 'tis kind to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones ; and good be extracted
From evil o'er which it is folly to fret.
The wisest of mortals have foolishly acted,
The kindest are those who forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones ; Oh, think then no longer
That the sun of affection forever has set !
Eclipsed for a moment, its rays will be stronger,
If you, like Jehovah, forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones ; your hearts will be lighter
When kindness of yours with reception has met.
The flame of your love will be purer and brighter,
If God-like you strive to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones ; Oh, purge out the leaven
Of malice, and try an example to set
To those who are craving the mercy of Heaven,
Though sadly too slow to forgive and forget.

Let bygones be bygones ; remember how deeply
To our Heavenly Father we all are in debt.
They value His infinite goodness too cheaply,
Who heed not His precept : " Forgive and forget."

THE OLD MAID'S SOLILOQUY.

YES, I am thirty, I am thirty to-day,
Though my cheeks are not hollow, my hair is not
gray ;
Though my heart still is happy and bouyant and young,
I know the last song of my girlhood is sung ;
And that I have sunk to the lowliest grade,
And am branded by all men, a hopeless old maid.

I would rather not tell them how old I am now,
As time has not printed the years on my brow.
My face is not faded, my heart is not old,
Then why should I tell what the years have not told,
Since telling would cause them to blame or upbraid,
Or, pitying, call me a lonesome old maid ?

If I even laugh now, or dare to wear curls,
They'll say; "She is trying to be like the girls ;"
If social or dressy, somebody will say,
"How affected she is ; how she tries to be gay.
She wants to get married. Too late, Anna Slade !
Nobody will have you, for you're an old maid."

If quiet and thoughtful, and somewhat retired,
Again they'll translate like a prophet inspired ;
"She refused her last chance, and now she is sad ;
Or, what is more likely, a chance never had ;
Thinks much, though so still. Let her sit in the shade,
And pout there in silence, the gloomy old maid."

They watch every movement, they note every tone ;
Though suffering intensely, I scarcely dare moan,
Lest they say, "She's peculiar, her nerves are unstrung ;
The strength of her system has gone to her tongue.
She's fidgety, fussy, and sorely afraid,
Like all of her species, a nervous old maid."

So it matters but little whatever I be ;
I am single and thirty, is all that they see ;
If pleasant, and genial, and social, and kind,
They'll whisper, "She is a flirt, and queer, never mind."
And if silent, they'll call me gloomy and staid ;
I can never be anything, but an old maid.

BEAUTY WITHIN.

I STOOD by the sculptor, and gazed with him
On a block of marble that lay at our feet.
I saw but a rough and ponderous stone,
But I trow, as his dark eyes flashed and shone,
He saw there a form complete.

I turned to the thoughtless and busy world,
And each little day had cares of its own.
Drifting on with the current of toil and strife,
In the ebb and flow of this changeful life,
I forgot the cold, rude stone.

Thus the days were lengthened to months and years
Ere we stood again in his little room,—

And would I could picture or paint for you
The being of beauty that burst on my view
Like stars on the midnight gloom.

A form of rare beauty, a lighted brow
That an angel in glory might proudly own,
And beautiful eyes, and velvety cheek,
And lips that were parted as if to speak.
O, was it a lifeless stone?

I stood by the sculptor as one entranced,
And he murmured these words in accents low :
“ You see now, the beauty I saw that day
In the block of marble that heavily lay
At our feet so long ago.”

And this is the lesson I learned of him :
There is beauty enshrined that I can not see ;
There's goodness and beauty on every hand,
If we only could see or understand
What it is or soon may be.

So we stand by men seeing their grosser sins,
Their folly and weakness that lead them astray ;
Rebuking them sorely and standing apart,
Forgetting that down in every heart
There's a germ of good alway.

When death, the great sculptor with icy hand,
Has broken the clay from the soul apart,

We kneel at the grave and strive to forget
Our chidings that fill us with bitter regret,
Seeing his goodness of heart.

Though he died a culprit, unloved, unwept,
He might have escaped so sad a fate
If some one had looked in his heart and seen
The good that was there, or might have been,
And told him ere 'twas too late.

LOOK UP.

(A F R A G M E N T .)

THOUGH shadows thy pathway may darken,
Or storm clouds thy pathway betide,
The shadows are bordered with sunshine,
The clouds have a silvery side.

Learn a lesson from June and the roses,
That the bright queen of summer adorn.
She sings of their beauty and fragrance,
Unmindful that each has a thorn.

Do your weary feet tremble and falter,
In the treadmill of duty and care?
Do your burdened hearts sigh for a respite,
From unceasing labor and care?

Each life has its sunshine and tempest ;
The brightest skies oft are o'ercast ;
And sunbeams fall often unheeded,
Till they shine in the halls of the past.

But for hands that are patient and willing,
For hearts that are hopeful and strong,
The present has treasures to gather,
With fragments of gladness and song.

Let smiles of contentment and kindness,
Chase tears of vexation and pain,
Till a beautiful rainbow of promise
Is formed of the quivering rain.

HOW SCHMIDT CAME TO VOTE FOR THE AMENDMENT.

(The Amendment in Iowa, June 27th, 1882.)

O H! 'twas a golden and glorious day,
One of the rarest of rosy-crowned June.
The bee and the butterfly flitted away,
And song birds unfolded their merriest tune.
The fair earth was robed in her velvety green,
And bright colored blossoms abundant were seen.

All was beauty below, and no cloud in the sky,
Save fleecy white clouds in the velvety blue,
That seemed waving in triumph to signal on high
The result of the labor men purposed to do.
Ah! fleecy white clouds in the blue of the sky,
Were they banners of peace held by angels on high?

The highways were crowded with women and men,
Unmindful of nature, so gladsome and fair ;
They were solving the problem of nations just then,
With a look of deep earnest, or shadow of care.
For the aged and the youth were alike heard to say,
“ Are you for or against the amendment to-day ? ”

And beautiful children, in snowy array,
Marched the streets with the tread of a soldiery band,
With banners that pleaded—“ Men, vote as you pray ;
“ Vote for children, and home and your dear native land.”
They seemed like fair seraphs, those children of ours,
With heavenly chorus, and garlands of flowers.

I will picture a scene in the village of N———,
That occurred on the shore of our beautiful state ;
And prove how children may sometimes lead men,
And thrill them with purposes noble and great ;
How two little forms on that notable day,
Stemmed the tide that was bearing their father away.

There stood in an alley some ruddy-faced men,
Made so more by the cup than the sun's burning heat,
Slipping a bottle again and again
To some wavering voter that threaded the street ;
Saying, “ Don't pull your standard of liberty down ;
Vote for your beer and the thrift of the town.”

Hark ! there came a patter of innocent feet,
Awe-stricken, they said, “ 'Tis the Juvenile Band.”

And, swift as an arrow, one sped, cross the street,
 Grasping her bloated-faced sire by the hand,
 Crying, "Papa don't go with these bad men, you know
 Their way is the wrong way; please, Papa, don't go."

And fast as he could, came a little lame lad,
 While great tears were raining adown his pale cheek,
 "Father," he faltered, "saloons are so bad,
 They ruin the strongest as well as the weak;
 And wine is a mocker, it always brings blight;
 For your sake and my sake, please, father, vote right."

Until Schmidt, broken down, said, "Vel, vel poys you
 see

Dese are my schweet children, vat talk so to me.
 Dat is my Lena, mit dress vite as schnow.
 Und zoft yellow curls; she's my papy, you know;
 Und her eyes are as blue, und her cheeks shust so red
 As vas my poor Mary, my girl vat is dead.
 Und dat is my Shonny, my dear creeple poy,
 Poor leetle fellow, he don't hafe much choy;
 Und vatefer he ask me, I nefer say no,
 Cause he is a creeple, und I like dot poy so.
 You see how dey lofe me, how schweetly dey say
 I should vote de Amendment, cause it is de right vay.
 But I've voted und drank mit you poys, all my life;
 Shtood out against efery tings, even my vife.
 There vere tears in her eyes, ven I shtarted away,
 Und I knew shust so vel, vat she wanted to say;
 But I said: 'You're a woman, und shust like de rest.

Daint no use to talk, I know my peesness pest.'
Und demperance lectures I nefer vould hear,
Cause I wanted my vay, und I wanted my peer,
Und if anyvone gife me a demperance tract,
I dore it to pieces, or handed it pack.
But my leetle toads here, dey come hoppin so vast,
Dey caught me, und cooked me, und shpoiled me at last.
Now don't try to laf, und shake your heads so,
Ven a Cherman says yes, he nefer means no.
Don't show me dot pottle, you spose dot I dink
Less of dese shildren dan I do of dot drink?
Come, shicks, let us go. God pless your schweet souls.
Zeems queer to see such leetle trash at the polls.
Ish dis de right dictet? Vel here goes de vote.
Vat you put dese schweet posies for onto my coat?
Oh my! how you hugs me; schweet Lena, you choke.
I feel now shust like dat my neck vas half proke.
Does dot make you so glad? Den vat vould you do
If I'd put my name on your demperance pletge too?
Vel, gife me a pletge, und gife me a pen,
Und I'll write me down shtout mit your demperance men.
Oh! it makes me veel happy to do vat ish right;
I vant to go home long before it ish night.
Let's shtart now; ve can valk in the broad of the street.
I don't care if dey lafs, all de roughs dat ve meet,
For I'm not azhamed, my schweet shildren of you;
Not azhamed if dey call me a 'Pand of Hope' too.
Vat make you hop so? Dot pletge, und dot vote?
It make me veel, too, most too pig for my coat.

Und vat vill your mooter say? Vat vill she do?
Vill she vinish tis neck you've most proken in two?
Keep shtill as a leetle dead mouse on the shelf,
Und I'll schlip in und tell her the shtory myself."

THE MERCHANT ON THE FARM.

I'VE been thinking, to-night, Jennie,
As I watched the little boys
Playing with the wooden trinkets
That we bought for Christmas toys,
And marked our thoughtful Fannie
As she read to little Jen,
That this year has been the brightest
Of any we have seen.

Scarce two years have passed, dear Jennie,
Since we bought our little farm,
But everything upon it
Has been working like a charm,
Though to you, my faithful help-meet,
All the praise of it is due,
For to-day we had been beggars
Had it not been for you.

When we lost our home, dear Jennie,
In the great Chicago fire,
Lost our home and every dollar,
The future looked so dire,

That I bowed my head in anguish,
And with a bitter groan,
Recalled the treasured thousands
But yesterday our own.

From the splendor of our mansion
To the clamor of the street,
With my little homeless children
Crouching helpless at my feet !
And you so pale and patient
Scarcely like a mortal seemed,
As your dark hair floated wildly
And your eyes so brightly beamed.

I was well nigh mad with anguish,
But you knelt beside me then,
And said, " Think, Harry, darling,
How much worse it might have been.
You and I are spared each other ;
All our little ones are here ;
And God, I'm sure, will help us ;
Then let us be of cheer.

" And see here is one thing, Harry,
That I chanced last night to save ;
'Tis that set of costly diamonds
That a year ago you gave.
And I'm tired of the city,
Let us buy a little farm,
And we shall be so happy,
And so secure from harm.

“ I have all my life been idle ;
It will be such rest to work.
There’s much that willing hands can do,
And we’ll never, never shirk.
And Fannie will be stronger, too,
And so will little Jen;
And the boys out in the country
Will grow up better men.”

Your counsel sounded strange, Jennie,
But I see now it was right,
For we never were more happy
Than we are this very night.
And we’re just as well contented
With the diamond-purchased farm
As we were when wealth and splendor
Gave to us its varied charm.

TO THE OLD AND NEW YEAR.

FAREWELL, old year ! In thy dying face
A look of silent reproof I see,
And, with blushes and nameless pain, I trace
The records of twelve months made by me.

I have listlessly folded my hands to rest
When the poor and needy went sorrowing by,
And sighs of compassion have heaved my breast,
And I’ve prayed that others may do, not I.

I've prayed that some one, with loving hand,
Might lead the prodigal safely home,
And wept as he starved in a stranger's land,
Though my hands were folded and my lips were dumb.

O teach me, Savior, thy cross to bear,
And make me willing and glad to go
For the suffering and sinful, to do my share
With willing heart and purpose true.

MY BEAUTIFUL MOTHER.

THEY tell me thine eyes were beautiful once ;
That brighter than stars they flashed and shone
As they glanced in earnest, or danced in mirth,
Ere the days of thy beauty and youth had flown ;
But I count them fair and luminous still,
Though much of their lustre be washed away
By tears of affection and tears of grief.
They've wept o'er the erring from day to day,
Dear eyes, in their faded depths I see
A world of watching and love for me.

They tell me thy face was beautiful once,
That thy brow was wondrously smooth and fair,
Ere time had furrowed the blooming cheek,
And drifted snow in the shining hair.
But down in those graven lines I trace
A rarer beauty than youth may own,

And I know that faded and furrowed face
Is beautiful still at the Father's throne.
Dear face, it has furrowed and paled for me
And no one can ever more beautiful be.

They tell me thy hands were beautiful once,
Dear tremulous hands that I hold to-night,
But I answer them back, they are beautiful still,
Through years of labor for God and right.
They've spread the mantle of charity wide
Over my failings from day to day,
And sought as none other would seek to guide
My wayward feet in the narrow way.
Blest hands, I know in the angel's sight
They were never more beautiful than to-night,

THE TWO SISTERS.

“WHY have you come? To taunt and jeer?
Or blanch my cheek with grief and fear?
Or have you come to read and pray,
And talk about a better way?
I can taunt and insult bear
Better than hollow, heartless prayer.

“ But speak, whate'er your mission be,
And I will list with courtesy.
Nor blame me if I seem unjust,

And put in christians little trust ;
They've spurned me by the scores away,
Refusing to do aught but pray.

" But in your kindly face I see
A look of pity bent on me.
But whence this interest ? Why this change ?
Ah, lady, it seems passing strange,
'Tis but a year ago to-day
You turned me from your door away."

" Ay, Maggie, what you say is true,
I showed no christian love for you,
But conscience has rebuked me sore
For closing 'gainst you heart and door ;
And oft I've searched the crowded street
Again your wistful face to greet.

" For when I knelt at eve to pray,
Your sad reproach drove peace away ;
And then so many times in dreams
I've helped you cross dark turbid streams,
Until I can no longer bear
This sense of blame and weight of care.

" I come as friend with heart sincere,
Keep nothing back for shame or fear,
But tell the whole, as best you can,
That I may wiser do and plan.
Where are your parents ? Are they dead ?
And, tell me, were you ever wed ?"

“ No, most like me lead single lives,
The vilest men want purest wives.
Parents? Ah me, I hardly know.
I thought, till thirteen months ago,
My mistress was my mother too.
But mother love I never knew.

“ Poor mistress called me to her side,
And told me, just the day she died,
My mother was a lady fair
With large brown eyes and soft brown hair.
And then she coughed and sank away,
But roused again thus much to say :

“ ‘ Here is your locket I have kept.’
Then like a babe she sobbed and wept,
And faltered, ‘ O forgive me, child !’
And when I kissed her then she smiled.
But that was all she ever said,
A moment more and she lay dead.

“ I know naught of her friends or name,
Or whence or how by me she came.
Maybe her lot was strange as mine.
I know she was a scholar fine.
And though some grievous faults she had,
I’m sure she was not wholly bad.

“ She taught me from my alphabet
So wise and well I can’t forget.

Arts, languages, sciences rare
She made me grasp and hold with care.
And when I pleased her she was kind,
And petted me when quick to mind.

“ And when they laid her form away,
My heart seemed buried too, that day.
But as I viewed this pictured face,
So full of tenderness and grace,
My heart grew comforted and light,
And all the world grew strangely bright.

“ And then I longed to holy grow,
Like that sweet face my heart loved so.
For oft in dreams would mother come,
And tell me of a fairer home,
And bid me leave this life of shame.
Ah ! lady, that is why I came

“ To you one year ago to-day.
But none were kind, all turned away,
And so my secret and my vow
I’ve hidden in my heart till now.
Here is the locket set with pearls,
A lady fair and two small girls.”

“ Come closer, Maggie, can it be
This is your mother’s face I see ?
Quick, bare your arm, I want the right.

Yes, there's the birthmark, plain in sight,
A crimson line and cross of blue
'Tis passing strange, but, ah, 'tis true.

“ O, outcast, you're my sister May,
We thought was drowned in the bay.
Come, put your arms about me tight,
I feel so ill, so strange to-night.
I've much to tell, you've much to hear,
My mother was your mother dear.

“ We had a home far, far away,
Upon the Massachusetts bay.
A happy home, with parents dear,
Who always sought our lives to cheer.
You were my pet and playmate too,
And I was always proud of you.

“ When you were two and I was eight,
I left you on the beach to wait
Till I should cull some flowerets fair
To wreathe a garland for your hair.
But I, so eager at my play,
Stayed longer than I meant to stay.

“ And when I came and found you not,
And called, and looked in every spot,
I sought the house in hopes to see
You snug and safe on papa's knee.
But you were gone, and with your face
Went all the sunshine of the place.

“ Ah that was long and long ago,
But while I speak it chokes me so.
The search, the grief, the bitter tears
Come back undimmed by flight of years.
Your limp, wet hat was all we found,
And mourned you in the deep bay drowned.

“ Forgive me, if you can, dear May,
My carelessness that summer day.
But O ! I beg your pardon more,
The day I turned you from my door ;
For had I bid you enter then,
You had seen mother's face again.

“ But now she sleeps by father's side,
Three years ago dear father died.
But it will some poor comfort be
Their blessed resting place to see ;
And there, beside that sacred sod,
May find the paths of peace they trod.

“ O, don't sob so, and shrink away,
For I'm so glad I found you May.
The past, with all its woe and blight,
We'll bury out of heart and sight.
To-morrow you'll be twenty-one,
New life, new love, new hope begun.

“ My husband, dear, will welcome you,
And prove a brother kind and true.

And my sweet babes,—you'll shortly see
How glad and happy they will be.
They'll clap their hands in wild delight
When I bring auntie home to-night.

“ My boy is five, a roguish lad,
There's nothing 'bout him, though that's bad.
He looks like John ; and Maud, like me.
Our dainty Maud is hardly three.
But baby looks almost like you,
With golden curls and eyes of blue.

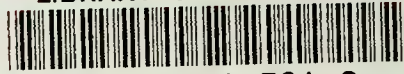
“ And then she bears your name dear May.
She has such a cunning, coaxing way,
Somehow I think you'll like her best,
Tho' dearly you will love the rest.
Their prattle sweet, and winsome way
Will drive the darkest cloud away.

“ Come ere their bright eyes dull with sleep,
For still at home they vigil keep.
John, too, will think 'tis growing late,
He waits with carriage at your gate.
I long to send the glad news round,
' The dead's alive, the lost is found.' ”





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